

**Brazos River and Associated Bay and Estuary System
Basin and Bay Stakeholder Committee (BBASC)**

Thursday, January 29, 2015 at 1:00 p.m.

Brazos River Authority Central Office located at 4600 Cobbs Drive, Waco, Texas

Minutes

Members Present: Dale Spurgin, Chair; Tom Michel, Vice-Chair; Cindy Bartos; David Blackburn; Tom Conry; Phil Ford; Horace Grace; Dan Loomis; Ed Lowe; Curt Mowery; Tommy O'Brien; Jeff Bragg (for Ned Meister); Kevin Wagner; Gary Spicer; Ken Kramer (by phone); Eddie Saucedo (by phone)

Call to Order

Chair Dale Spurgin called the meeting to order and the member attendance was taken.

Public comment

There were no public comments made at this time.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the December, 2nd, 2013, meeting as well as the January 30th, 2014, email vote were approved by consensus.

Presentation from Science Team awarded SB3 Work Plan Contract

Ed Oborny, BioWest, and Dr. Jacquelyn Duke, Baylor University, provided an overview of the funded Environmental Flows Validation study. The stated goals of the project are to enhance the understanding of flow-ecology relationships and develop a methodology for testing established flow standards. Mr. Oborny indicated six sites had been selected along the Brazos to analyze factors including aquatic and riparian communities, fish recruitment, and estuary baselines. To date two study design workshops have been held and a draft final report is scheduled to be submitted to the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) August 2015.

Dr. Duke presented the preliminary results of the riparian component of the study. She informed members that the study team selected three indicator species (Black Willow, Box Elder, and Green Ash) to evaluate seedling, sapling, and mature tree distribution, maintenance, recruitment, and survival. She demonstrated that establishment of seedlings on the river bank correlated with water levels reached during peak flow events.

Stakeholders inquired as to whether conditions within the basin allowed for sampling high flow pulses, whether conditions present during the study will be clearly identified in the report, and whether the results of the study will be applicable to other portions of the Brazos River system? Mr. Oborny indicated several high flow pulse events had occurred this past fall season but none were overbank. In addition, he also stated the data collected will be evaluated in the context of the conditions observed during the sampling period and that while some ecological relationships might be suitable to apply to other river reaches, such as upper or middle Brazos, most analyses are reach/site-specific. Members were also informed by Tiffany Morgan, BRA, and John Botros, TPWD, that each organization has studies ongoing within the basin.

Draft Study Report Review and Additional Funding Opportunities

Nolan Ralphelt, TWDB, informed members that several BBASCs expressed interest in reviewing the study draft reports prior to being finalized. As a result, the Board is inviting and

encouraging members to volunteer to participate in the process for their basin. Members inquired as to the timeline and extent of the review required, as well as if there is a limit to the number of reviewers that can participate. Mr. Ralphelt indicated that the draft study reports are due in late summer of this year, reviewers would be provided a guidance document outlining the reviewing process, that reviewers have the option to review all or only a portion of the draft reports, and there is no limit on the number of reviewers that can participate in the process. Additionally, members inquired as to whether the state agencies (TWDB, TPWD, & TCEQ) would be reviewing the Brazos Basin study and expressed interest in having Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) participate in the review. Mr. Ralphelt indicated that the report would be made available to the TPWD for comment. BBASC members were in agreement to request volunteers from the Brazos BBEST to provide comment on the draft report and member Dan Loomis, volunteered as a reviewer for the BBASC.

Members were also made aware of future funding opportunities including the request for proposals by Texas SeaGrant and the additional legislative funding requested by the TWDB for further implementation of BBASC work plans.

Update on the Middle and Lower Brazos Texas Instream Flow Program (TIFP) Studies

John Botros, TPWD, provided an update to members concerning the status of ongoing Texas Instream Flow studies in the Middle and Lower Brazos River from. He indicated that habitat, biological, and water quality components of the study have commenced for six sites located near Allens Creek, Hempstead, Navastoa, Bryan, Hearne, and Marlin. He indicated that data collection is set to be completed by the end of 2015, with a final report due out December 2016.

Acceptance of Resignations and Action on Vacancies

Chair Spurgin informed members that Gena Leathers, Willie Gavranovic, and SuEllen Staggs whom represented Chemical Manufacturing, Agricultural Irrigation, and Municipal interest groups, respectively, resigned from the BBASC. Members unanimously agreed to accept these resignations and were in agreement to solicit nominations to fill the vacancies.

Discussion on Member and Alternate Attendance

Chair Spurgin and Vice-Chair Michel opened the floor for discussion concerning member and alternate attendance requirements as dictated by the approved 2011 Brazos BBASC Meeting Rules. Members were informed the rules state,

“In the case of excessive absences, which ordinarily shall mean absences from more than one-fourth (25%) of regularly scheduled meetings over the full membership term by a member without an alternate being present, a member shall be deemed to have resigned from the BBASC. When cumulative attendance by a member falls below this threshold, the Chair shall send the member a letter warning the member of the potential for a deemed resignation and alerting him or her of the opportunity to request special consideration.”

Chair Spurgin indicated that according to attendance records about half of the current members had equal to or greater than one-fourth absences from regularly scheduled meetings. Members discussed whether or not revise the attendance requirements in the rules and whether the same alternate can be designated for more than one member. The members were in agreement that to comply with the current rules, every member with greater than 25% absences would be contacted by the Chair. Members also expressed that special consideration of member's still wishing to serve would be evaluated on a case by case basis. Member David Blackburn also suggested that a record of attendance be provided at subsequent meetings to every member. At the next

meeting, members will consider if a revision of the meeting rules is needed along with whether the same alternate can be designated for multiple members.

Other Items

Member Tom Conry provided a financial update to members and indicated that there had been no activity since the last Brazos BBASC meeting. Vice-Chair Michel requested the BBASC/BBEST webpage hosted by TCEQ be updated to better reflect the recent actions of the committee (i.e. work plan funding awarded, study in progress, etc.) and adoption of the TCEQ environmental flow standards for the Brazos Basin. Leslie Patterson, TCEQ, indicated that the webpage could be updated and would follow up after the meeting. Additionally, members inquired as to when the Environmental Flows Advisory Group (EFAG) would approve the Brazos work plan and whether any action was required on the BBASC's part. Mrs. Patterson stated that no information had been received from the EFAG concerning a timeline of approval. Member Ken Kramer informed members that no action is required from the BBASC concerning EFAG approval of the work plan and expressed while the EFAG has not met recently, that they might be seated possibly during this legislative session, once new appointments to the committee are made.

Next Meeting Date and Future Agenda Items

A meeting is tentatively scheduled for August or September 2015 with a conference call potentially in June or July 2015, depending on if additional legislative funding becomes available. Future agenda items include action on filling vacancies, member and alternate attendance rules, legislative funding for further work plan studies and EFAG approval of the work plan.

Public comment

There were no public comments made at this time.

Adjourn